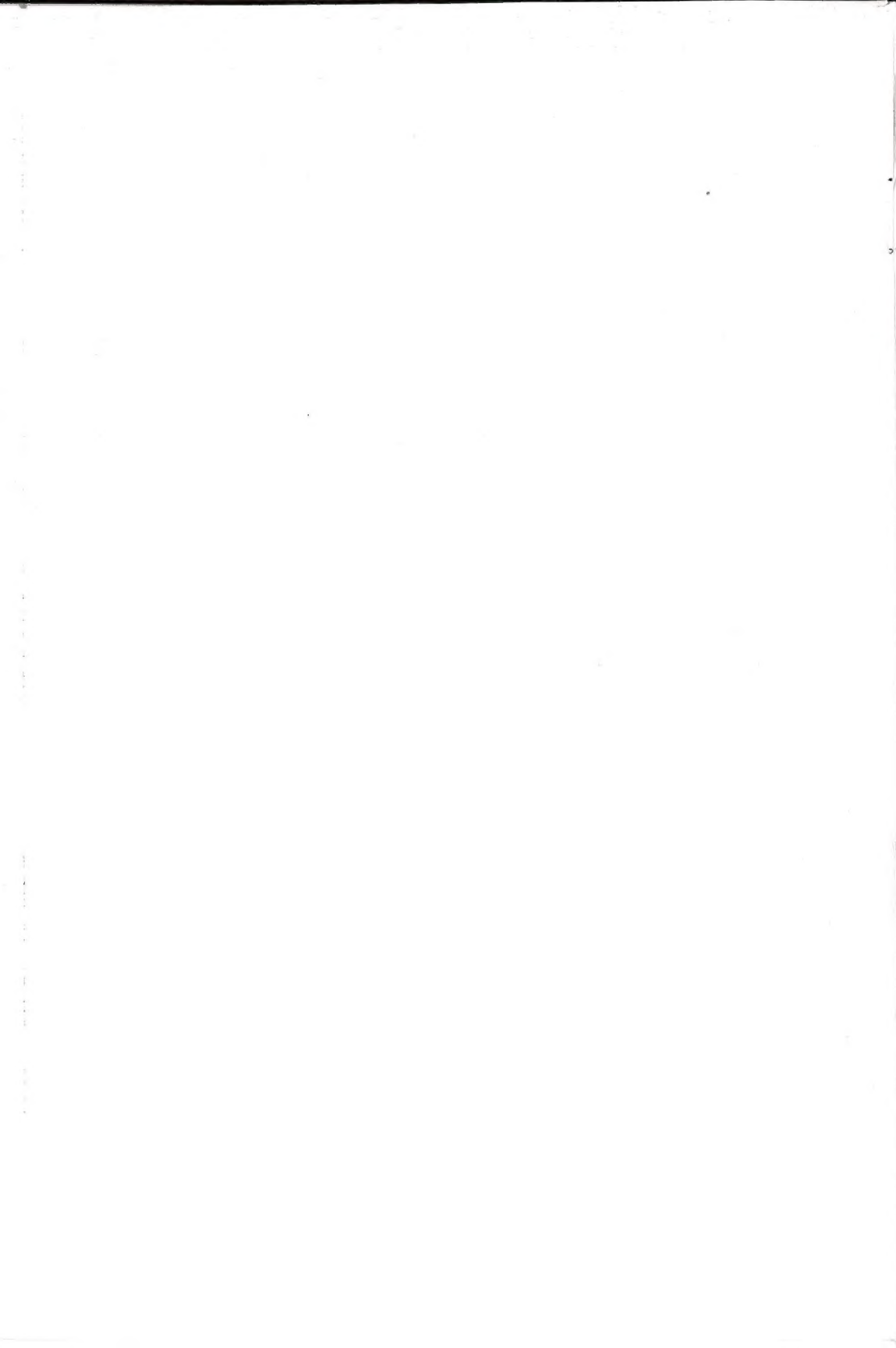


Patterns

St. Clair County Community College



P r e f a c e

With this issue, **Patterns** celebrates its fifteenth year as a showcase for the continuing creativity of the students of this college.

The reading of the past fifteen years of **Patterns** reflects effectively the changing modes of expression that have marked the college as it continues to serve all ages of students in the community.

The committee expresses special thanks to Chester Aubuchon, Dean of Students, for his continued and devoted support over the years.

Judges

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Richard J. Colwell
Eleanor Matthews
Fred Reed
Gary Garrett

Art

Patrick Bourke
Jack Hennessey



Agony

Mark McKnight

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All the Young Dudes

Sue Huyser

The Frisbee Thrower

by

Richard Hudgins

Dawn smiles,
And the sky brushes
The stars from her silver hair.

A solitary boy
Tosses his frisbee,
Banking against the breeze.

His frisbee
Flies from his hand
And arches over the sky.

Again and again.

In his mind
He is an acid-Nijinski,
Dancing a pas des deux.

His partner leaps into the sky.
Arms and legs trail
brightly colored arcs.

Two easy bounds,
He extends his arm,
And his partner has returned.

Chamaileon

by

Ruth Kodet

Guarding the wall in silence
this ancient sculpture
resting on a grey, dirt base
patiently weathers the passing
of living statues in shrouds.

"It is a mirror," so said a minor prophet,
"and every portrait passing
seeks his fortune there."

What leaves were ever green
are memories for older shadows
and dreams for young pretenders.

A curious relic;
some look upon the uplifted arms
with a certain, inner passion:
these arms might, just could,
carry freedom far and wide.

But the etchings on the forearms
tell a sorry tale
of earlier temptations
yielded to in blind abandonment.

"Wisdom is staying alive,"
said that same poet.

But sometimes, in the night,
when the moon descends
and kisses the tips of her fingers,
she seems to whisper softly
like the ancient Sirens
who were her secret cousins,

"Come, and I will set you free,
come, and I will let you wear my body
as a ladder to the stars."

The old men only hear a sighing
of tired night-winds.

But the young,
drawn in dreams to her feet,
are already touching the warm flesh
and reaching upward for her arms
now straining to grasp her fingers
to take the promise offered
of freedom for the taking:
to jump to higher ground;
to run and run and run away;
to flee the tomb
and all the boxed-in pain —
yet never, ever would forget
the tender kiss that set them free.

By morning's paler yellow
dreams dissolve in rude reminders
of grey reality.

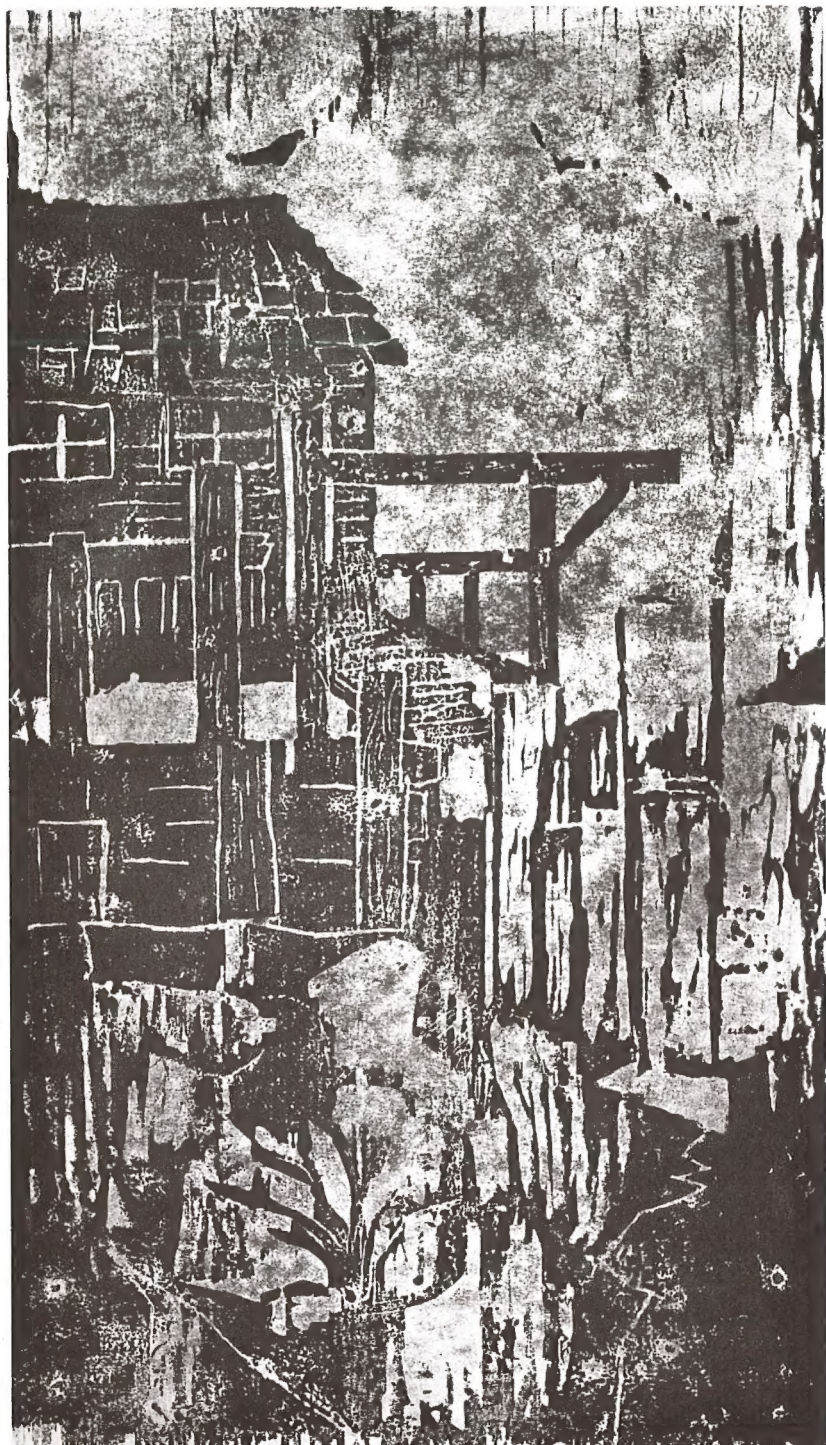
It is a stranger vision, then,
when met in shallow day —
She, whose perfume enticed in darkness
stands aloof and ugly now;
a gnarled and leaning post
of messages too harsh
for innocent, trusting eyes.

And the arms are red, just slightly,
suggesting bloody men and bullets
sometime in the times before.

Those dainty finger-tips
now point only upward to a wall
on which are mounted guns
loved carefully by grim uniforms.

When the poor sun cries, "enough!"
and all the grey shadows melt away
into long, barred passageways,
the old ones will again hear
sad night-winds sighing
and the young will dream
that same new dream —

And all will sleep a restless sleep
waiting for nothing else.



The Night Dock

Bill Whiting

Chrysalis

by

Pam Pierce

I cannot recall exactly how many years I had been possessed with the cancer of loneliness. Perhaps it had found roots in my first breath of life and spread growing parallel to me ever since. All of my spirit had been gnawed away and what remained seemed a rotting pulp that appeared never to have lived at all. It seemed certain that my mind had separated from my body; as if the two had drifted apart somehow and formed within themselves. I existed alone in a small downstairs flat that my parents had shared with me until their deaths. My days and money were spent with dime store novels, magazines, and cheap wine, all pitiful attempts of escape from the lonely boredom that followed me mocking and panting from room to monotonous room. It was as if I were chained to that house. My numerous attempts to seek a new life elsewhere always drowned in the solemn realization that there was really nowhere else to go.

There was a day, however, when the sun showed his face to me for the first time in years. Yellow beams of dawn somehow permeated the tightly drawn window shade and spread across my morning bed, playing tag with my sleepy eyes, jiggling up and down as warm air from the register disturbed the curtains. The fog of sleep lifted from me and I began to hear noises above me; fresh, sharp noises that cut through the still air. There was a shuffling of feet and a tinkling of glass, and then the thud of a huge object set down on the floor above me. Life signs. Someone was moving in upstairs. People. How many nights had my body begged for sleep while my mind twisted and turned, opened and closed, rustled and reached for a sweet dream? The silence had always kept me awake, but now there were sounds. I got up and prepared a breakfast, then took a drink to soothe myself. The wine slid sparkling down my dry morning throat and with it came the strength to concentrate on the noises above me. A door slammed. A voice boomed, muffled between the walls. A man and woman were arguing. Their tones flew from shaking calm to screeching anger.

The red wine coated my brain and floated me back to my childhood years, the crucial years. I was sitting alone again, so much younger, locked in my tiny room with a pretty pink tablet I stole from Woolworth's and a writing pen I had found in the corner at school, buried under waste paper, ready to be swept away by the janitor's push broom. In the evening I would sit and write adventures, secret stories in which I could be anyone; a hero, a spy, a princess, or a gypsy, but most often a beautiful yellow butterfly with magical wings that could glide in the sky forever and never ever die. The bold black ink would flow from my pen with such amazing ease and speed that I would sometimes be surprised I could find such ideas, that my imagination was actually producing such beautiful fantasies. I would sit and write until a blanket of sleep covered me or until my cramped fingers could no longer hold my magic pen. But most often I was interrupted by my mother's whimpering pleas. Her liquid voice would pour through the cracks in my plaster walls or seep under my locked door, flooding the room up to my tightly sealed ears and pushing in.

"Rachel, What ya doin' girl? C'mon outa dere now, honey, it's time ya come out. It's time fer supper an' time ya come out. Rachie, I wanna see ya now baby, come out! There's supper, sugar, nice hot beef an'

some good carrots. Ya know how ya love them carrots, sugar! Rachel! Please, baby, please come outa dere! Yer dinner's coolin'!"

And I never really listened to her, although I could never help but hear.

Father, I remember was constantly disgusted with things, but most of all he was disgusted with me. He was a huge burly man with bulging eyes that drove holes through me. Like a Renaissance sculpture, he stood towering over my head.

"Leave the girl to be a worm", he would shout in answer to mother's pleas. "Leave her be. Leave her stay an' starve in dat room if she wanna keep herself in dere. Leave her to rot in dere, too! You come away from dat door, woman! Doncha see the girl ain't carin' about what's outside? She ain't concerned about what's outside dat room! A worm she is now and a worm she'll ever be. She's in dere locked up an' she gonna rot, by God! We can't get her out fer nothin'. I ain't wastin' no more a my good lungs screamin' through dat door no more! She ain't listenin'! Wife, come away now!"

Then mother, poor mother, would cry in long choked sobs that must have squeezed the life from her heart. Her sobs would get louder and louder until they filled my whole head and blurred my vision. I remember the night that father came crashing into my locked room. He read all of my secrets and ripped them, page by page, until all that was left were the scraps of my dreams and the shredded memory of hope lying in piles on the polished hardwood floor. He threw them all in the big black can in the alley for the stray cats to pick among and the rats to chew upon and the trash men to burn.

The memories faded and I found myself staring into the wine glass. I heard a door close gently and a soft patter of little feet upon the stairs that ran up the other side of my kitchen wall. Another door opened and closed and there was someone on the porch. I rose from the table to peer out the smeared picture window and saw him through the glass. A small boy, eleven maybe, with a big warm jacket snug around him. His hands were dug deep into his pockets, his fists clenched tightly within them. He turned and looked into my face and I tried to smile but I could not remember how. My brain clicked on and recorded his look — the hollow, stormy eyes, the solemn, expressionless mouth. The face somehow seemed ancient, as if it had seen too much, as if it hated deeply but refused to show even a line of hatred. The boy was proud and secret; he held my eyes for an instant, turned suddenly, and walked swiftly away. My eyes blurred as I watched out the window, searching for something to fix my eyes upon. Then my mother's voice blended into my ears again from the past and set my mind spinning.

"The look of her, husband, that look she has! Like she's starvin' or somethin'. She just sits an' stares outa dat winder. Her mind's on holiday, I know it is! Never sayin' nothin' at all. She just ignores me. Where did all the hate in that child come from? Lord in Heaven knows, I tried! My baby, she just ain't right inside her head. Gimmee m'pills, husband, I'm feelin' faint. Stephen, husband! Now I spent the whole damn day cleanin' up that kitchen an' ya've messed it all over again. Ya come home an' spread all a yer junk out on the counter and those big heavy cases a yers scratch my floor! Damn ya! Don't lift those big cases yerself now! 'Member yer heart! Yer scratchin' the floor!"

My eyes focused and sharpened the boy's image. They followed him down to the end of the block to the field property that the railroad company owned. Between the tracks brittle brown weeds tried to grow and strange little snake-like plants sprung up among the railroad ties. He sat between two small dead trees and his eyes darted frantically around to make certain that no one was intruding in his private pleasure. He brought a toy gun slowly out from under his jacket and out of his pocket came a dingy rag. He began to polish the toy tenderly with the rag, rubbing it until the grained wood and black plastic barrel shone gleaming in the midmorning sun.

I watched his small delicate hands grow into father's huge clumsy ones as I once again traveled on memory's road.

"Bring me a cloth, wife, and be silent. And make sure it ain't soiled, neither. Now, ya wanna nag? Go an' nag da walls cause I ain't listenin' to yer gripin'. Or better yet go on an' nag dat Miss Worm dere. You go on an' leave me with my babies."

Father's terrible bellow would often soften to a soothing sigh as he opened his big black cases.

"How are ya, my lil' babies, my lil' gems? Look at how dat pearly handle shines! What ya could do to a man! Blow his damn fool head clean off his shoulders! An' I even got the bullets for allaya, too! How ya musta looked when ya first come outa da store, so many years ago! My babies, I'll polish ya all. One day you'll bring a fine price, a buncha dough fer me. Or maybe I'll put ya in one a dem museums an' people'll pay ta come by an' see ya shine. There, yer ready fer bed, allaya. All shined up good. G'night, now. Back in yer cases ya go! Sleep tight!"

The sun hit my eyes and burned father's image.

After a few weeks the sun began to warm the frozen earth and I knew it would soon be spring. I started my spring cleaning early and after three days of scrubbing and tidying only the kitchen closet remained untouched by the mop and broom. I knew now I could open that closet door. They were still there on the top shelf, two black bulging leather cases that stared with studded eyes. The couple upstairs was starting to quarrel again above me and I could hear terrible crashing noises starting at one end of the ceiling and ending at the other, accompanied by muffled pleas and screams. While the noises mounted I felt the vibration of the boy coming down the stairs and onto the porch. I knew he was going to the field, to his little escape place.

I grabbed the first of father's cases and dragged it out through the back door to the garage. Then I went back and got the other. I imagined their contents tarnished by now. I needed the space in the closet so I decided to clear a shelf in the garage for the collection. I knew I couldn't have lifted them up to a high shelf so I made no attempt, and placed them on a low one by the door.

All through the night the fighting above me continued. I wondered if the boy could sleep. I had watched him often in the field and a few times after the first our eyes had met. Although we never spoke, I knew what he wanted from me. And I had given it to him that day. I had lost all knowledge of morality. I no longer knew right from wrong or good from evil. But the boy knew, and for that knowledge I blessed him.

When Sunday morning came I turned on the radio and listened to the

news. I had almost forgotten what a radio sounded like. I remembered mother listening to late programs when father was out for the evening. I sat on a pillow in the middle of the living room floor and sipped hot tea, wondering how many days I had spent inside that house. The walls were still there, grey and ugly, but there was a light coming from the outside that made them almost seem transparent. There were things outside I'd never seen, places I'd never been, but I knew it wasn't time yet. No, not yet.

At dusk I was still sitting there. By that time, the fighting upstairs had clicked off and on a dozen times. The voices would reach a peak and fall, over and over again through the course of the day.

Those damn cats were picking around in the trash again. I could hear them in the garage. I always went out to shoo them away but that day I was just too lazy. Let them pick. It was just trash, I kept telling myself. Just lousy, no good trash.

I sat back and waited. And then the shots came, first one, then two, then three more in a row, ringing sharply through the walls. Two thuds echoed in the ceiling. I knew it was done. I heard the stairs creak and the door swing open and I rushed onto the porch. The boy looked into me. Two tiny cracks developed in the corners of his mouth and his lips spread apart until his teeth poked out between them and he was smiling. I nodded to him but his eyes were now fixed above the two small dead trees in the field where a tiny yellow winged creature fluttered lightly in the wind, over the melting snow.

Poem

by

Sarah Jo Houser

May I share your love as I would share
 my new found love with thee
May I be the one you trust to hold
 your secrets and your dreams
May I share the thoughts you lock deep
 within the prison of your mind
May I pass the guardians of your heart
 and be the one they bind

May I look through your searching eyes
 and behold the sights they see
May I be by your side when you win
 your many victories
May I gaze upon your stars at night
 and your sun rising in the morn'
May I tend the garden of your heart
 and reap what it brings forth

May I spend the long dark nights
 lying by your side
May I enter your restless dreams
 and drift upon their tide
May I grace your every thought
 and there, forever, be
May I share your wondrous love as I would share
 my new found love with thee?



Winter Weeds

Dorothy Henry

Your Friendly Psychiatrist

by

Beverly Stein

"I'm going to do it! I am! I am!" cried Abigail vindictively; her slender fingers rubbing briskly through her long, blonde hair, pell-melling it into disarray.

"I'm going to divorce my husband, put the kids up for adoption, yank the phone from the wall, kill the dog, lock the doors and live the life of a recluse. I've had it!" she exclaimed contemptuously to Nora, her friendly psychiatrist — friendly and inexpensive.

This was not a new occurrence for Nora. She had served as Abby's chief confidante and surrogate psychiatrist since the pastor of the local church introduced them to one another, three years ago.

Nora, relaxing an aging body in the brown and gold tweed rocking chair, leaned her gray-haired head gently against the chair's high back. A soft sigh escaped, undetected, from her pallid pink lips as she waited for Abigail to proceed. Her pale blue eyes tenderly surveyed Abbey's trim young body, now tautly poised in anger and resentment, her vivid deep blue eyes glaring hard from a golden-tanned, blemishless face.

Abbey reminded Nora of herself thirty-some years ago. She also had a tremendous tendency to become frustrated and inflamed over frivolous happenings. Age and experience had tempered this inner burning and she knew it would do the same for Abbey.

Abigail, head lowered, hands shoved deeply into the hip-pockets of faded bell-bottom blue jeans, sulkily pacing back and forth across the gold shag carpeting continued, "I had the day all planned. This morning I was going to work on the damn lecture I'm to give tonight at the missionary meeting. You know how I hate giving lectures — almost as much as I hate writing them!"

"You're going, aren't you?" she asked, a slight quiver apparent in her voice.

Nora nodded, knowing she would go if only to give moral support to Abbey.

"Then at two o'clock I have this organization meeting of the Girl Scouts to attend. I figured I would get home from the meeting in time to start dinner and straighten the house before the kids and Joe got home. Hah, so I thought! But my E.S.P. is telling me it is going to be 'one of those days'."

As Abbey pauses, Nora, a slight smile accenting the lines in her face, interjects, "Would you like to tell me about it?" She knows perfectly well that Abigail is going to anyway.

"Well, it started with Joe informing me this morning he would be working late tonight. He knew I needed him to baby-sit for me. He's doing it out of spite. I know he is. He's peeved over a trivial little remark I made to him last night and he's getting back at me. I hope his cold turns into pneumonia!" Abbey hisses between clenched teeth, as she strikes her fist against the burnt orange bricks of the fireplace.

Nora commences to ask what the trivial remark was that might have triggered this so-called revenge on Joe's part. But, sensing that Abbey wants a listener and not a questioner she refrains.

Abbey, seating herself rigidly on the edge of the sofa and gingerly massaging her bruised fist resumes, "Then Penelope called. This even before I get the kids off to school. I spend the next hour and a half listening to her exaggerated complaints about her mother-in-law. What really burns me though is she didn't allow me to get in any gripes about 'my' mother-in-law. Not a one! Then to top it off, she asks me what she can do about her mother-in-law."

"Did you give her any advice?" Nora, rocking slowly back and forth asked.

"I sure did. I told her to try arsenic. I'm using weed killer on mine," replied Abbey, a crooked grin etching its way across her youthful face as she snuggles back against the softness of the sofa cushions.

Nora was pleased to see the anger begin to subside from Abbey and her sense of humor begin to return.

"Finally," continues Abbey, her hands and face gesticulating the strength of her emotions. "I get a chance to head upstairs, followed closely by one tan short-haired (cockapoo?). You know, that beautiful long curly-haired blonde puppy you talked me into accepting from your friend. Well, anyway, I seat myself at the desk and spend the next fifteen minutes shuffling through that myriad of hen-scratchings I jokingly call my etchings, attempting to locate something resembling a speech I could quickly finish — say in two or three hours."

"After deciding upon a topic — which I am not going to disclose to you now, I'll wait and spring my little surprise on you and the other women tonight — I sit there and stare at the paneling behind the desk, painstakingly sorting through the extent of my vocabulary in search of words I dare use to express my feelings on the 'slightly' controversial subject. "But," laughed Abbey, "those that kept popping into my mind were better saved for use in a backroom poker game or a cathouse, not at a church function."

Nora, momentarily lost in her own thoughts, recalls the tribulations she experienced in her college days with writing. How she would diligently search the breadth of her vocabulary for just the right word to place emphasis on a particular idea and the frustration she felt when it would elude her.

Meanwhile Abbey, having poured herself a cup of coffee continues, "Suddenly I hear this crunching noise behind me. I turn just in time to see the last eyelash of what was once the head of Ginny's favorite Barbie doll, disappear into the mouth of that same tan, short-haired (cockapoo?) you talked me into getting."

Nora, her small liver-spotted hands clasped tightly in her lap, chuckling to herself, thought, yes that was rather a blunder I made, talking Abbey into taking that pup, sight unseen. But, though she continuously complains about the animal she wouldn't give it up for anything. Aloud she asks, "What did you do about the doll?"

"There wasn't much I could do about it," laughs Abbey. "But I certainly relished every bounce that damn mutt's body made as it fell from step to step."

"Well, anyway, back to my woes. After my moment of sadistic bliss I went back to the desk, picked up the pen and began to write. Nothing. So I pressed the pen harder against the sheet of paper — still nothing. Then I started to run the pen desperately, back and forth across the paper, then up and down." Abbey's hands flashed about gesturing the movements of the pen. "Still nothing — but a hole. So I pick up another pen, try it — nothing. By this time I am becoming just slightly frantic and I start to search for a pen that will write. Six pens and several minutes later I settle on a pencil. A round soft-ledged monstrosity used by Ginny in kindergarten," Abbey rambles on.

"Now at last, I seat myself back at the desk, pencil in hand, paper in front of me, when arising to greet my hot little ears comes the shrill ring of the telephone."

"And that," Abigail smiles, "Is when I hit the ceiling. I threw the pencil across the room, sent the contents of the desk flying with one swish of my hand, ran down the stairs, kicking the tan, short-haired (cockapoo?) as I passed it, grabbed my coat, hissed a 'go to hell' toward the ringing phone and dashed over here."

Abbey, her face aglow with laughter and contentment, her eyes reflecting the devilishness of her soul, grinned widely and placing a little kiss upon Nora's cheek, declared, "Nora, I love you. You always have a way of making everything seem right. Thanks for your understanding. I've got to rush now. Got to get home and write that speech before the Girl Scout meeting."

Nora watched Abbey as she sprightly exited through the door. "Anytime Abbey, anytime," she murmurs as tears of happiness well to her eyes.

And A Child

by

Richard Hudgins

We stopped in a pose
Of perfect tranquility.
We were like a painting;
 A man, a woman,
 And a child,
On a green hillside,
Beneath a tree.

I laughed with the pleasure
Of that peaceful moment.
Your red hair
 Was a gemstone
 For the sun.
Your little girl
 Touched the ancient tree
 With her innocence.

A child knowing only beauty and love.



Garden of the Mind

Keith W. LaVere

Rebirth

by

Sarah Jo Houser

The wind whipped about in gusts, like hot breath on his neck, beating his tired, aching body with clouds of dirt, sticks, and stones, clinging to the sweat that rolled down his face and back. It stung his eyes and made breathing next to impossible. His mouth and eyes were filled with the gritty substance, and he walked blindly, but no matter how far he dragged his hot weary body, it was still before him, behind him, and on both sides of him, torturing him until he wanted to lie down and die. But somehow he struggled on, every step filling his body with pain, knowing that if he stopped, even for a moment, he'd never walk any farther ever. He reached out, hoping to feel something solid, but to no avail; all he clutched was sand.

That was all that was left now: sand. Oh, true, there were dead remnants of trees and broken cities, a few billion decaying bodies, but that didn't matter. The only thing worth counting was people that were alive; living, breathing beings, and he could only count one, himself.

He felt like giving up. It would only be a matter of time and he'd be one of those rotting bodies that didn't matter.

He stumbled. A body lay at his feet, almost completely devoured by the grinding sand. All that remained of the person (male or female he couldn't tell), were a few remnants of clothing, some bones and the head. The mouth was open, outlined by thin white lips pulled tautly around rotting teeth. One eye, half gone, stared blankly at the sky that he told himself was overhead somewhere.

Looking at the remains of the body, he fell forward, a sick feeling sweeping him. He vomited, and the feeling passed, but he could not get up again, and he knew that there he would die. He cried, his body shaking with loud, convulsive sobs that were soon muffled by the onslaught of the wind. Why did he live while others died? Why must he live through this torment? He felt more alone and afraid than he ever had during his lifetime.

He knelt there in the dark cloud of sand, with his hands clasped at his chest. Why am I despised so of all the rest? Why is fate so against me? A thought passed quickly through his mind and was lost to the incoherent jumble of memories, pain and fear that filled his thoughts. He repeated the thought. Or is it fate? Again the picture flashed, but this time he caught it and developed it until it was a complete image in his mind's eye. A woman, a beautiful woman kneeling before a manger. And in the manger was a baby, such a child as he had never seen grace the earth. The child held an inner beauty, and around both shone an aura of light, setting them apart, to him, as something sacred. And the thought continued to develop. He remembered sitting, as a child, in a vast building, where a respected man told them of the maker of all things. He spoke of . . . (how could he ever forget?) . . . God. That was it! And of . . . the Virgin Mary, and of . . . Joseph, and the holy child, Jesus Christ. It all came back to him now! It was God who called upon the sands to do their worst, not fate. To destroy an entire human race; a world. He remembered again those days when he was a child, and what he had believed to be the last days of God. He had sat there next to his parents, hearing of the crucifixion of Christ, when a siren blew. People panicked, and his father grabbed him and threw him

out of a window of the church, as a bomb destroyed the last church on Earth! People cried and some spoke of the death of God. And that was not the last bomb either. For now the world had been destroyed. Destroyed by too much knowledge. Destroyed by the wrong kind of knowledge.

But, was God really dead? Would God let His children run amuck without a guiding hand? Surely He wouldn't. But, perhaps, this was punishment for their great errors. And especially for the greatest error of all, destroying the churches. Surely God would discipline them for that! But, the man thought, if he repented his ways, if he honestly repented his wrong doings, then, maybe . . .

He prayed to the heavens. He repented. He asked God to forgive him for the wrongs of his fellow man. He opened his heart to the Lord. There was no sign. Doubts filled his mind, but he continued praying. Nothing! And then, slowly, and with many hesitations and many pauses, he recited the Lord's Prayer,

"Our Father uh . . . who art in . . . Heaven
Hallowed"

It took time, and he felt suffocated. The wind blew sand in his eyes and mouth, and he was hardly able to remain kneeling, the wind was so strong.

He finished,

". . . . forever and ever."

No sign; nothing happened! He repeated it again, twice more, three times. He was ready to agree that God was truly dead, and then he remembered:

"Amen."

The wind whipping around him died to a faint breeze, and the sand fell from the air. From the ground rose large trees of beauty and grace that would have been unmatched anywhere on the new "dead" Earth. And grass grew, and flowers blossomed; the sky was blue, and from white lacy clouds a light rain fell, and a rainbow spread across the sky. Birds sang all about him and animals of all kinds roamed about free, fearing nothing. He looked down and saw that he was naked, but he was not ashamed.

A voice called to him from the heavens above:

"Thou art the first born and thou shalt be called Adam."

Evening Sun

by

Pamela Reimel

This red sun is the blood tears
Wept by Woman for Man
Formed in a huge sphere
To remind us that

Mary still weeps for her son.



Sargon

Mike Ward

Life at a Lamppost

by

Lisa McCalmon

Darkness is beginning to absorb the remaining mist of gray dusk. Neon lights are flashing and casting an orange-red haze against the black night. I find myself walking past a blur of store windows, signs, and faces. I don't know where I am going. But for some reason, I don't really care. People are looking at me. They don't realize that I notice them. I see them. I can sense the penetrating glances and eyes that sweep from my long, curly hair to my unshaven face. It doesn't seem to bother me anymore. I know what they are thinking and how their minds operate. Cast into the the wrongness of my own generation, I have no way of defense. I had wanted to protect my pride and soul in the yesterdays that lay behind. But now I have no feeling, so nothing matters — nothing at all. I'll let them stare. I am a person known by no one. I think I just decided that. Maybe life would be tolerable if I remembered myself as a stranger, one who walks the streets at night, shielded from reality.

A stout man passes me quickly, only to leave an aroma of tobacco that escaped from his wooden pipe. The sweet smell brings back a remembrance of my "old man." I wonder what he would say if I told him that the only memory I have of his good life and him is a wooden pipe. He would probably not listen. Why should he now? He never did before. He ignored Ma, too. Always ill-tempered from a large quantity of gin, she just yelled constantly and threw anything that her shaky hands were able to grasp. I would sit and watch the neighbors' lights as they flashed on in rapid succession and wait for the painful silence that followed each quarrel. I haven't returned since I left that place of emptiness. It seems so long ago. I continue walking.

The air has become chilled and I shiver in my worn, denim jacket. I have no idea of time. It isn't important to me. It only comes and goes. I don't want to slice it into pieces because someone would only grab for it out of selfishness. So I let it be.

I see a little boy with his nose pressed against a store window. He is gazing at the bright-colored toys arranged on a velvet platform. I once looked at life that way, wondering about everything around me and building dreams. Somewhere, something snapped. My dreams were broken and I never wondered again. I realized that nothing would ever be the way that I had imagined. Not wanting to live in a fantasy world, I forced myself to face such truth. Now, I find I am unable to do even that. And I wonder how long I shall survive.

I stop on a street corner, under the dim light of lamppost. My legs ache. I am tired of thinking, very tired. Lowering myself onto the curb, I notice a tear in my faded jeans. I feel an urge to tear and tear at the ugly world around me. Maybe if I forced the heavy darkness to come crashing down, then all the hateful, selfish, and narrow-minded people would disappear. I am still very tired.

My thoughts are interrupted by a stifled sob. I look around me and see a small mass huddled against a dingy, brick building. Standing, I look closer and approach the bent figure. My mind becomes blank as I realize that it is a girl. She is crying, sobbing, trembling. I feel the impulse to reach out, touch her and invade her troubled world. I place my hand

gently on her slender shoulder, but she gives no response. I don't know what to do. She is still crying. I sink down beside her on the cold pavement and I stare at the pool of light under the lamppost. I want to leave and not think about her. But a feeling compels me to stay and I don't fight it. She needs someone. I can't reject her. All of my life, people have turned me away. I don't want to do that to her.

She suddenly turns and faces me. I see eyes flashing with anger and desperation. In one brief moment, I am accepted and my offering is received. She begins to talk as the words come and come again. She speaks of punishment and hate, of peace and love, of life and death. She tells me how she has been hung up on dope, but now she is free to see the world she has created. She is afraid and frightened of what this world will do to her.

I am not aware of my problems right now. I just want her to forget those feelings so much like my own. It has been such a long time since I have wanted anything at all. But at this moment, the longing is very intense.

I take her hand and tell her to feel the stillness of the stars and soft blackness of the night. As we walk through a dark park, she listens to the whispering breeze as it brushes hair into our eyes. Her face softens and her voice becomes steady and calm. Her mind is strong and her sudden realization of this strength overwhelms her. She finds understanding as it is released through the intimacy of two hearts and two troubled worlds. For one small span of time, she is at peace with her desires and her weaknesses. Her mind is at ease. My mind still wanders.

I start thinking again as the sky becomes a streak of tinted pastels. The day will break soon and I must leave her now. If I stay much longer, the bitterness embedded within me will soon appear. She will know that I am a stranger.

We find ourselves beside the familiar lamppost with empty good-byes and shameless tears.

I say to her, "Never fear the sun. It brings days of new hopes, dreams and promises. Please remember that."

And I turn. I start walking to seek a place to hide from the daybreak and the sunshine that it will bring.

Without Time

by

Sandy Ann Lottner

The clock runs without end,
Sometimes slowly, sometimes swiftly,
Eternally creating
formations and images in the years.
It is the same with life,
We live,
Some of us quickly,
Others with caution, taking time,
and the pain of experiences
create lines and impressions,
and our faces,
like the time,
show what happens in our lives.



Still-life

John Cartwright

"One Day I Looked Into The Mirror"

by

E. Joseph Fleming

Note: Please keep in mind that the tale which you are about to read is not unlike a true one. As a matter of fact, for the most part, it is true. But then again, great truths have always been found amidst the remains of untruths. Also, great truths have, more than not, been hidden by a veil of untruths (for various reasons).

A couple of evenings ago, while reading J. R. Tolkien's **The Hobbit**, my concentration on my reading was interrupted by the most unusual little fellow. I thought the little fellow to be a leprechaun at first. But, he looked very much like anyone you would expect to see while walking along the streets anywhere. Except, of course, that he stood only about two feet tall and wore the most unusual Robinhood-type suit. I happened to look up from my book for some reason that I can not recall now and simply found him standing in front of me.

The very instant that I noticed the little fellow standing there in front of me he subjected me to the puzzlement of the ages with a statement, "What a joke!"

"What a joke!?" I said. "What do you mean — a joke?"

At that he started laughing. And continued to laugh for a considerable amount of time, only momentarily subsiding it to inject the statement, "what a joke he has played on you!"

This turned my puzzlement into annoyance. I must stay calm, I thought. Remembering of course, a little tidbit in Irish folklore that states that if a leprechaun is seen, the seer must always keep his attention fixed on the little fellow for fear that the leprechaun will vanish, as he appeared. And so, keeping my attention fixed, I calmly said, "wait a minute — you have not answered my first question yet."

This seemed to startle him. He stopped his laughing and simply gazed at me in a wondering sort of way. I begged him to stop speaking in riddles and to explain the riddle of which I presently found myself a part (his appearance). He shrugged his shoulders, as if to admit defeat in trying to distract my attention with his laughing, and nodded his head in compliance with my request.

"I knew this would happen someday," he said. "I have been following you people around for a bit over two hundred years now. I have been engaged in a very detailed study of humanity so that I might find out the reason that your race has evolved only as far as it has. You are barely progressing, you know. And getting quite in the way of the rest of the evolutionary process, I must say. So, someone had to find your shortcoming to see what could be done. That was not the problem, however. I was glad to do the research. The thing that bothered me was that I suspected that one day I would be detected by your race and have to relate my findings to one of you."

"Have you never been detected before this?"

"Oh, I have been detected before this," he went on as though he did not hear my question. "But, I have been skillful enough to divert the atten-

tion so that I could get away without a great deal of trouble.”

He glanced at me out of the corner of his eye, in the hope, I suspected, that I had let my thoughts wander astray. Since he undoubtedly noticed that I had not, we went on.

“At any fate — here I am — there you are — and what a joke. I believe that is the order of things. Now, I just answered the ‘here I am’ part. And the ‘there you are’ part is sort of an obvious statement. But, ‘what a joke’ — yes, what a joke.”

By this time the little fellow had already started pacing the floor. He held one hand behind his back and stroked his chin in a nervous way as he paced. His facial expression gave me the impression that he was getting deeper and deeper into a state of total concentration. He acted as though he was not even aware I was present.

“Before I get into answering your questions — consider this,” he said without as much as a glance in my direction and continuing to pace and stroke his chin. “Let us say that God is a mirror. And let us also say that a great light shines from this mirror and is reflected into a second mirror, and a third mirror, and a fourth mirror, and a fifth, and so on. Of course as the number of the mirrors and reflections increases, the purity and potentiality of the light is naturally going to decrease.

“Now consider,” he went on, “that in the beginning — the beginning before what humanity would call the creation — there existed only God and nothing. And let us say that God sent out a series of emanations of and from himself — into, of course, the nothing. If we now parallel this emanation idea with the analogy made earlier with the reflections in the mirror, we come up with a succession of emanations which become less pure and less potent than the original source as the number of emanations increases.

“A deduction that can be made from one of your own scientists’ work, Albert Einstein’s “Theory of Relativity,” is that matter at its highest point of evolution is pure energy and that pure energy at its lowest point of evolution is matter. Now, let us equate God and pure energy. Also, let us equate man and matter. If we now fit our equation into the deduction made from Einstein’s theory, we come up with the idea that man at the highest point of evolution is God and that God at the lowest point of evolution is man. If we further fit this into the idea of the emanations and reflection of the mirrors, we come up with man being the final emanation of a series of successive emanations of and from God. Which brings us to the point, or should I say joke, in question. But first — what do you think of what I have told you thus far?”

For the first time since he began his little oratory, the little fellow stopped his pacing, stopped stroking his chin, and looked directly into my eyes. Also for the first time since he started his oratory, he was smiling. It was not the usual warm friendly smile one would wish to see, however. It was as though he was smiling on the outside yet laughing at me on the inside. Needless to say, I was speechless.

Since I offered no response to his question, the little fellow resumed his pacing — again stroked his chin — and dispensed with his insulting smile.

“At any fate,” he continued, as though he really did not expect an answer anyway, “as you have probably already gathered, your problem is

God. Which is quite the paradox, I must say — for God's problem is really you. But that is indeed another problem. The problem at hand actually seems to be your worship of God.

"Now, if you have considered the analogy of God being a mirror — and the analogy of the light shining from this mirror and being reflected into another mirror, and so on, as being emanations of God — and, therefore, considered that the Human Kingdom is the final emanation of God through, of course, a final mirror, and since you worship God, i.e., the mirror, I am afraid that you will conclude that since you are the final emanation, that you worship the final mirror. The final mirror is, as I have stated before, of a far less pure and less potent quality than the original, as is the final emanation. I am afraid that you will also conclude that the only way to worship the original mirror, i.e., the true God, is to work your way back through the emanations, i.e., the reflections, i.e., the mirrors, until you come face to face with the original mirror — and are, of course, the primary emanation.

"The joke," he went on, as he stopped pacing, stopped stroking his chin, and again stared directly into my eyes, "is that through some imperfect reflective property of this final mirror you perceive yourself as being the primary emanation and this final mirror as being the original mirror. But you do not take into account the deduction made from Einstein's theory when you perceive this fallacy. Let it suffice to add then, that physical form is matter — and that matter is energy — and, according to our deduction from Einstein's theory, that matter is energy as its lowest point of evolution."

I had turned my attention to pondering upon what the little fellow had been talking about. But, when he had finished what he was saying, I turned my attention back upon him.

"Do you mean," I said. But he had vanished.

Do you mean, I said to myself. But he too had vanished along with the little fellow.

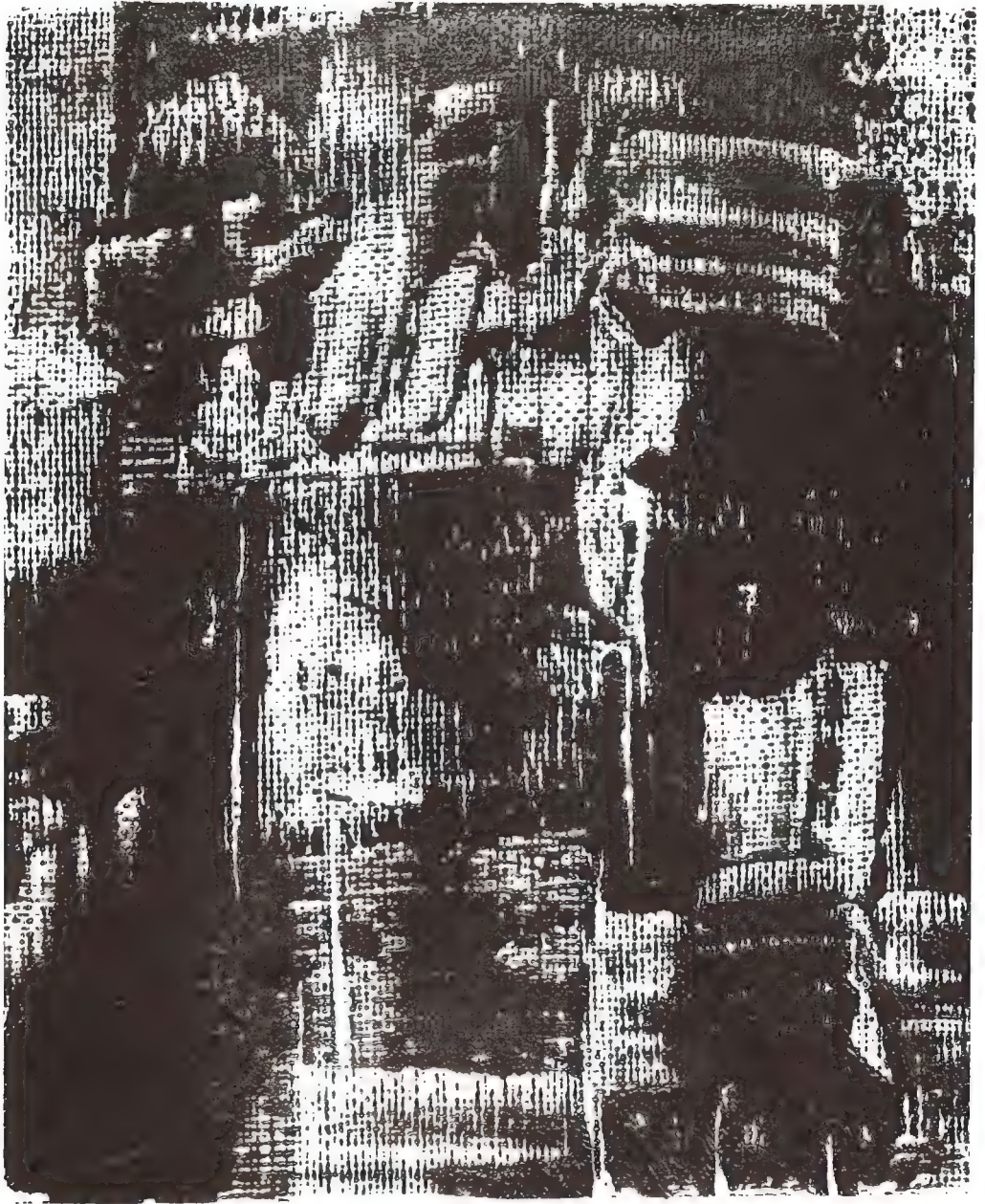
On the Outside, Looking In

by

Richard Hudgins

For one dark moment,
I doubted.
Troubled, I saw the world
Through different eyes.

Seeing double
Puts large rents
In the tapestry
Of complacency.



Vague

Roberta Lake

Flags For Father

by

Pam Pierce

You breathe alone
On an island
In the middle of a vast deep sea.
No ships do you keep
But a small silver raft.
I have a fleet —
An army of golden winged sails
That would rescue you,
But you wave no white flag.
Your raft glides out
Only at night when it is black
And very cold.
Once upon a red velvet dream
My ship met you in the center
Of the blue liquid world,
But without a signal,
You sailed swiftly back
To your island tower.
Within the walls
You are a safe, white bird
And you wait.
Have you never seen my castle,
My mansion of deep purple?
My home is in a cloudy city
But I have rooms and rooms
For you,
From each window
White billows can be seen.
To survive the sail
You need courage,
But the journey is worth every peril.
Mount your raft
And sail to my harbor.
A thousand stars
Will lead you out of the black
And into the day,
And I will be standing
On the dock waiting
With arms full of roses
And eyes full of worship.
Ah, how forgetful I am
To ask you to set sail
On such a cold day!
And how forgetful I shall remain
Until silver rafts become golden gallions
And islands melt into the sea.
Until that time
My harbor
Will fly flags
For you.

Love Shines Brightly

by

Lisa McCalmon

Love is like sunshine. It has no boundaries; it may touch anyone. The sun offers warmth on a cold day, and love does the same. Love is the sun. It shines upon happy tears, and remains behind shadows of sadness. It is strong and possesses a powerful radiance of understanding and protection. Love's sunlight is captured but it is uncontrolled. It can be shared and enjoyed, but may also penetrate and burn. The warmth of its presence is unmeasurable and deeply felt. Love is the brightness that exposes the mystery of darkness. It can be hidden by clouds of uncertainty and can overcome raging storms. It offers nourishment for growing hearts and flowers of hope. The radiance of love creates rainbows from teardrops. It is eternal and will shine forever.

My sunny days have been many. Love was my first teddy bear and my mother's lullaby. Sunshine shone when my father's arms encircled his tiny, injured girl and my heart was warmed. Love was the touch of a hand that cooled a burning fever, and love was soothing words of comfort. It glowed in the lighted smiles surrounding my birthday cake, and it calmed the patient voices that answered my ambiguous questions. Love was others' concerns for my safety and the encouragement for my accomplishments. It was a warm blanket being tucked under my chin. Love bubbled the excitement of sharing surprises, and love adorned each brilliant Christmas tree.

The sunshine became warmer as its rays reached other places. Love created outbursts of laughter during mischievous sprees with friends who shared my secrets and the anticipation of new events and beginnings. Brothers and sisters contributed loving support, acceptance, admiration, and the freedom of sharing and caring.

High school days offered more rays of love. Small portions of responsibility enriched sunny experiences. "Special" friends taught me to feel love for other people and to respect a person as an individual. Memories were made meaningful and friendships endured. Sunshine was reflected in my tearful eyes on graduation day.

Many years have given me bright moments of happiness and the ability to find that brightness when darkness settles over. I have learned to appreciate every morning sun and to feel the need for its warmth after every sunset. I seek its radiance within people's hearts and ways of sharing a radiance of my own. The sun is essential for our survival, and so is love. The sun is universal. Love should be shared by all.

Why?

by

Pamela Gessert

Why is because so many have to cry.
Why is because so many have to die.
Why is because that no one seems to care.
Why is because it seems nobody's there.



March Mayhem

Cheri Krieg

The Inheritors

by

David Casado

William Golding chose as an epigraph to **The Inheritors** a passage from H. G. Wells' **Outline of History** which, in the words of Sir Harry Johnston, describes the Neanderthal man as a "gorilla-like monster" and states that the "racial remembrance of such . . . may be the germ of the ogre in folklore." In writing his novel, the author explores this concept of a long past and almost forgotten meeting between man and his distant relative and through the use of three separate and distinct perspectives or points-of-view leads the reader into comparison and evaluation of man and Neanderthal.

The first point-of-view carries the bulk of the story which concerns the chance meeting of a group of Neanderthal (the people) and the new man, Homo sapiens. This meeting produces a clash which ends with the destruction of the former group. The perspective which is employed to tell this tale is uniquely of the people, coming largely through the simple perceptions of one of the group, Lok. The narrative follows closely, pretending to no knowledge except that of the people and showing toward them both deep understanding and affection. This is expressively shown in passages such as one in which the people are comforting Mal, their leader, after he has fallen into an icy stream.

The people gathered round in a tight little group. They crouched and rubbed their bodies against him, they wound their arms into a lattice of protection and comfort. (They) . . . crouched round Mal and shared his shivers.

In similar detail, Golding merges dialogue and narrative to show the reader that these are a gentle folk, knit into a tight and loving family. He shows their unwillingness to kill, their laughter and sadness and, in short, makes the reader an intimate part of the people and their world.

Then, into this world, Golding brings man and without abandoning his point-of-view, examines their actions in a noncritical, indeed, a non-understanding manner. That is, the perspective has become so completely sympathetic to the people, the Neanderthals, that the actions of man are meaningless because there is no common ground of thought. This brings to the reader a simple, reportive style of writing.

Throughout this phase, the reader learns, and through the application of social values and intelligence, understands what these men are like. At first, the Neanderthals are curious and friendly, calling out to the men, wishing to find out what manner of creature these are. But as Lok calls across the river, he sees without understanding, the use of a bow and arrow as an offensive weapon. Again, the observation of action is uncritical; that process lies in the reader who, feeling warmth for Lok and his family, finds this unwarranted attack to be vicious.

Soon after, Lok and Fa, a woman of the tribe, come together and try to tell what they have seen. This is expressed in a series of statements like single snap-shots, pictures of the men coming and the old woman of the people meeting them, the old woman dead, Liku (a child) and the "new one" missing, Nil gone and the spore of blood and "other" smells

all jumbled and mixed together. It is the reader who imposes order on this information and interprets what man has done.

The interplay of this simple perspective and reader interpretation plays its most important part in a long and detailed description of the men's camp. During this period of observation, the action Lok and Fa see makes little sense to them, but the reader recognizes man's cupidity, lust and drunken cruelty and cannot help but make the obvious comparison between the people and those they watch. After all the men have fallen into a drunken stupor, the people try to take back their stolen children but in the attempt Fa drops over the waterfall and is killed and Lok is left alone.

Golding chooses this point for an abrupt change in perspective. The narrative style is now descriptive and unemotional to an extreme as it observes Lok's action. Gone are any traces of warmth or understanding as the actions of a grotesque creature are described in much the same tone as man's actions were described by the people. But the difference is now in the reader's mind which holds the knowledge of what Lok is, what he has lost and how man has brought this about. The dispassionate and impersonal narrative does nothing to lessen the pathos the reader feels as he understands that the last of the people is lying down to die.

Once more Golding changes point-of-view, this time to Tuani, one of the party of men. From this perspective the reader learns first-hand that the motivation for the theft of the people's children was based on a whim of a beautiful woman who wished a plaything. He learns that Tuani feels only lust for this woman and hatred for her mate as he plans the latter's murder. Indeed it seems that every thought is rooted in the baser emotions and all is colored by the fact that these crude beings have wantonly destroyed the people. If there remained in the reader's mind any rationalization for these men's actions, this final perspective, which amounts to a look within man's soul, destroys it.

Thus, the method in which Golding employs point-of-view in his novel does lead the reader through comparison and at the same time forces the reader's conclusion. If it is a "racial remembrance" that gave rise to man's stories of the ogre, it is probable that had the people not been destroyed their remembrance of this meeting would have created a different "ogre" and with much greater cause.

Exhuberance

by

Teresa Peruskie

Rolling merrily
Down the hill, a boy laughs at
The upside-down world.

First Snow

by

Teresa Peruskie

Nipping playfully,
Swirling crystals age my hair
Coating it with frost.



Fungus

Carol Anderson

The Stranger

by Albert Camus

by

Sue Hutton

Albert Camus' first novel, **The Stranger**, portrays one of those terrible innocents in our society who shakes the world around him by not accepting the rules of its game. He lives among outsiders, but to them, too, he is a stranger. That is why some people like him — for example, his mistress, Marie, who is fond of him simply because he is odd. Others, like the courtroom crowd whose hatred he suddenly feels mounting towards him, hate him for the same reason. We ourselves vainly try to judge him according to our usual standards, because we are not really used to the feeling of the absurd.

Camus' novel relates the story of an ordinary man, Meursault, in Algiers who lives his life very truthfully and honestly. He becomes a friend of his neighbor, Raymond. Raymond has an Arab girlfriend, and her brother and his friends are enemies of Raymond. Meursault leaves with his friends for the seaside on a warm day. He and Raymond are confronted several times by the Arabs. While he is alone, he rather pointlessly and accidentally fires the gun which Raymond had given him, and shoots one of the men. Meursault is tried in a court which does not understand his philosophy of life, and he is sentenced to death.

It is in the sense of Meursault's absurdities and the idea of revolting against convention that the image of the sun appears as an important symbol throughout Camus' novel. Violent sensation and the impulse to destroy are related to the intense heat and light of the sun during a typical Mediterranean day.

The decisive series of events in the novel begin when the three men walk along the beach. It is not quite midday, but already the glare of the sun off the sea is described as unbearable. The men sight the Arabs, and it is at this point that Meursault observes: "The overheated sand now seemed red to me." (p. 67). In this phrase, an obvious physical reference to the intense light of the sun foreshadows, in a figurative sense, the violence that is to follow. The color of the sand under the sun's rays suggests the shedding of blood. After the scuffle in which Raymond is injured, the Arabs retreat, while the three Frenchmen remain stock-still, "nailed to the spot by the sun." (p. 69). Later, Raymond and Meursault walk together again, with Meursault becoming increasingly aware of the overpowering sun which is reflected off the sand in dazzling splinters of light. The two men reach a tiny stream and find the two Arabs lying there. Raymond, wishing to tackle his antagonist, hands his gun to Meursault, but the Arabs scuttle away and the two men return to the cabin. Meursault, reluctant as ever to talk to anyone, and dazzled by the sun, returns along the beach for a solitary walk. The sun then is described as a hostile presence. It is as though the weight of the sun obstructs Meursault's progress, and the heat makes his body tense aggressively, as against a powerful assailant. Each rapier of light suggests the hostile nature of the sun. Meursault longs for shade and sees ahead of him the rock behind which the Arabs had fled. He then realizes that Raymond's attacker is there alone. The encounter between the two becomes the central point of a complex of images of light, so that the sun and the impulse to violence are assoc-

iated. The destructive act takes place under the potency of the sun and seems to be an extension of its influence. The shape of the Arab dances before Meursault's eyes in the air, and the sea is like molten metal. The sun overwhelms the human will:

I thought that all I needed to do was to turn back and all would be over. But behind me a whole beach vibrating with sun was pressing down upon me. (p. 74).

The sun recalls to Meursault the heat on the day of his mother's funeral and this further emphasizes the association between death and the sun. The blood pounds in his veins. The focus of light multiplies; first, a flash from the blade of the knife which the Arab has drawn: "The light splashed out on the steel and it was like a long glittering blade striking me on the forehead"; next, the blur of light through the sweat on Meursault's eyelashes falls across his vision; and then again, the glitter of the blade, which is painful to his eyes. The world spins, and Meursault aims and shoots. Thus the sun symbolizes both violence and destruction in Camus' novel **The Stranger**.

All references are taken from Albert Camus, **The Stranger**. New York: Vintage Books, 1946.

On Reading James Baldwin, Again

by

Ruth Kodet

I was black
When I sat in that corner
but I did not stay there for long.

The sensations were indescribable
but very strong
and I knew I couldn't stand the test.

I don't think I can
survive being white, either
and grey is such a pale color . . .

But what can I choose?
There are no Earthly hues
protected from 'other men'.

I have no answers
and my questions are recorded
without fail every morning:

He who is without color
please get off the world
at the next scheduled stop?

Or, henceforth all color is banished
and he who insists upon his rights
must immediately leave the room?

Why is everyone shouting?
I only meant to ask
a simple, there-it-is-in-black-and-white question



Head Study

Mike White

A Study of the "Monster" in FRANKENSTEIN

by

Joyce Stover

Mary Shelley (1797-1851) was the daughter of two great intellectual rebels, William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, and the second wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, another great rebel and lyrical poet. At eighteen years of age she began writing **Frankenstein**, a "horror" story, which was to establish her as an author in her own right. Her tale followed in the tradition of the Gothic novel; used a background of typically Romantic Swiss scenery; and was written under the influence of distinguished minds, (Shelley and Byron). Published in 1818, **Frankenstein** was an immediate sensation and the author's only novel to attain permanent reputation.

Her story evolves around young Doctor Victor Frankenstein, a native of Geneva, who pursues his fateful research concerning the creation of life. His was an inquiring mind. He was a dedicated scientist who thought that if he could find the key to life, then his discovery might lead to the conquering of death. The result of his quest for knowledge was the "monster" in **Frankenstein**.

"The actual physical form of the 'monster' was assembled from the limbs and organs of cadavers, bodies stolen from their graves or executed criminals cut down from the gallows."¹ Frankenstein was selective. He used only the best parts for his creature as he wanted it to be as beautiful as possible. Just how he caused it to live and breathe is not known, but lightning and electricity apparently contributed to this phenomenon.

On a cold, windy night in November, when the air about the tower was rent by terrifying bolts of lightning and the very homes of the village trembled under the powerful peals of thunder, Frankenstein's dream was realized. His creature moved, breathed, walked — and lived. He had created life. He had duplicated the great achievement of the Almighty. In a sense, Frankenstein had become God.²

When Frankenstein actually looked at his "creation," what he saw was an eight-foot-tall man, whose:

. . . yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriations only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.³

In his moment of triumph:

. . . he was seized by a terrible chilling fear, a premonition that he had brought evil, not good, into the world. From the very moment that his creature first opened his "dull yellow eye," Frankenstein's triumph turned to an overwhelming sense of horror and disgust.⁴

He now saw his "creation" as the ugly, abominable "monster" that it was. Frankenstein's own reaction was to become gravely ill with a fever which lasted many months.

During this time there is no contact between the monster and Frankenstein. Their next confrontation occurs near Geneva at which time the "monster" relates to Frankenstein his actions during their separation.

The life span of the hideous "creature" falls into three segments. In the beginning, he seems to have the same senses and emotions as a human being. "Soon a gentle light stole over the heavens, and gave me a sensation of pleasure. I started up, and beheld a radiant form rise from among the trees"⁵ Thus the "monster" has an early pleasurable experience which is soon to be followed by one of rejection.

While looking for food and shelter, he comes upon an old man sitting in a small hut. "He turned on hearing a noise; and perceiving me shrieked loudly, and, quitting the hut, ran across the fields with a speed of which his deliberated form hardly appeared capable."⁶ The "monster" persistently tries to make contact with man. He enters another cottage and upon seeing him, the children shriek and one of the women faint. Other peasants appeared, who promptly fled, or attacked him. The poor "creature" escaped to a hovel which provided him with ". . . shelter, however miserable, from the inclemency of the season, and still more from the barbarity of man."⁷

Here the "monster" spent a long period of time. Keeping himself concealed from the DeLacys who occupied the cottage to which his hovel was attached, he watches an idealized version of simple life lived by a cultivated family. Thus he is educated by observing them and listening to them. He admires and loves this virtuous family. At night he aids them by carrying wood for their fire and by clearing their path of snow. However, when he tries to make friends with them, they run terrorized from him. Sick at heart, he in turn, flees. No wonder he exclaims:

Cursed, cursed creator! Why did I live? . . . from that moment I declared everlasting war against the species, and, more than all, against him who had formed me, and sent me forth to this insupportable misery.⁸

On another occasion he saves a drowning child. The father repays him by shooting him in the shoulder, causing a wound that took many months to heal.

This was then the reward of my benevolence! . . . The feelings of kindness and gentleness which I had entertained but a few moments before gave place to hellish rage and gnashing of teeth. Inflamed by pain I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind.⁹

The "monster" wants love, but finds himself unjustly repelled because he is hideous.

After this last episode, he wanders in the woods and eventually reaches Geneva. He makes one more attempt to gain acceptance. Meeting an attractive little boy, he tries to take him as his companion, but the boy screamed in horror and threatened him in the name of his father, the elder Frankenstein. At this point, the evil facet of the "monster's" nature completely overcomes the good and he murders William, the innocent Frankenstein child.

He killed with a terrible purpose, and that purpose was revenge, revenge first upon Victor Frankenstein himself for bringing him

to this hated existence, and upon mankind for refusing him the acceptance and understanding for which he craved. His was the horrifying cry of the misanthrope.¹⁰

With this murder, the "monster" enters the second phase of his life — one that is marked by killing and revenge.

In his long narrative to Frankenstein, the "monster" is begging for friendship, understanding, compassion and love. "If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them an hundred and an hundred fold; for that one creature's sake I would make peace with the whole kind!"¹¹ Thus he convinces us that his needs and desires are those of all mankind, even if his physical form is different.

Passionately the "monster" tries to bargain with Frankenstein, asking him to create a companion of the same species as himself. In return, he promises that the two of them " . . . will quit the neighbourhood of man, and dwell as it may chance in the most savage of places."¹² After much reflection, Frankenstein considers it his just duty to deliver unto the monster ". . . a female who will accompany you in your exile."¹³

Frankenstein travels to an island off the coast of Scotland, there to create his "monster's" mate. When his work is near completion, the "monster" again appears to Frankenstein, who is now having second thoughts about his project. He fears that a new ". . . race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror."¹⁴ In a fit of passion, he tears his latest creation asunder. The "monster", yet more enraged, renews his pledge of revenge, including a threat that he will be with Frankenstein on his wedding night.

The "monster" keeps his promises. He continues his career of cold-blooded murder for which Frankenstein's "monster" was to become notorious. First we have the murder of Frankenstein's friend Clerval; Frankenstein's bride, Elizabeth; and last of all, the "monster" strangles Frankenstein in the cabin of a ship en route to the North Pole.

Speaking over Frankenstein's dead body, he says to the Captain of the ship:

Do you think I was then dead to agony and remorse? A frightful selfishness hurried me on, while my heart was poisoned with remorse . . . My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy . . . I pitied Frankenstein. My pity amounted to horror. I abhorred myself . . . When I ran over the frightful catalogue of my sins, I cannot believe that I am the same creature whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of beauty and the majesty of goodness . . . The details (of my crimes) could not sum up the hours of misery which I endured . . . The bitter sting of remorse will not cease to rankle in my wounds until death shall close them forever.¹⁵

In a scene full of pathos the "monster" again arouses our sympathy.

Entering the final stage of his life, he vows self-destruction: "There is a heroism fully earned in the being who cries farewell in a claim of sad triumph: 'I shall ascend my funeral pile triumphantly and exalt in the agony of the torturing flames.'¹⁶ The "monster" then disappears on an ice-raft to be ". . . borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance."¹⁷

Here ends a career of murder and violence, a life of loneliness and despair. The tragedy of the story lies in the "misunderstanding" of the "monster." Had he been accepted and understood ". . . the story of Victor Frankenstein's great creation might have been a tale of mankind's greatest achievement."¹⁸

Mary Shelley's skill as a writer is revealed in the characterization of her "nameless" being, whose ". . . narrative . . . forms the highest achievement of the novel, more absorbing even than the magnificent and almost surrealistic pursuit of the climax."¹⁹ Her "monster" has the perception and desire of goodness but because of circumstances beyond his control he becomes evil. It is the duality in his nature that makes him more like man and less like a monster. In depicting him, Mary Shelley has imparted some universal needs of man — tolerance not intolerance; benevolence not prejudice; love not hate.

¹Drake Douglas, *Horror!* (Toronto, 1966), p. 89.

²*Ibid.*, p. 92.

³Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (London, 1970), p. 51.

⁴Douglas, p. 94.

⁵Shelley, p. 105.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 107-108.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 149.

¹⁰Douglas, p. 105-106.

¹¹Shelley, p. 154.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 157.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 238-242.

¹⁶Harold Bloom, *The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition* (Chicago, 1971), p. 128.

¹⁷Shelley, p. 242.

¹⁸Douglas, p. 107.

¹⁹Bloom, p. 125.

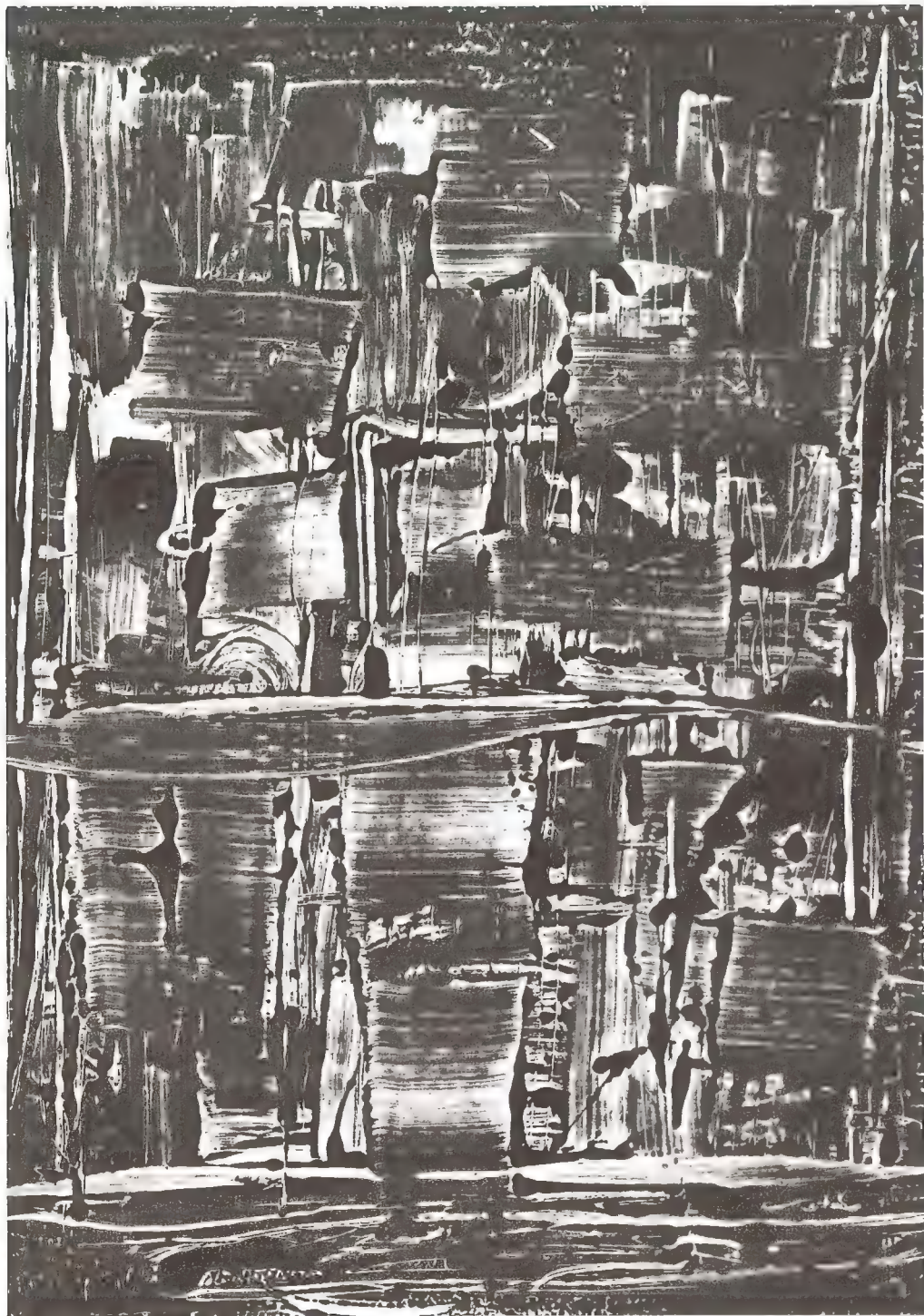
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Chemical Valley — Night Lights

Dorothy Henry

Traveling One Evening

by

Nancy H. Young

his music echoed across the
inches of air,
through walls of orange and
penetrated our minds
with color . . . ,

but it was
just for a short time . . .
the songs he played were
within the beauty of
our
lives . . .

we listened
to his
connotations of
music appreciation . . . ;
they were his answers to
his wonder of life . . . ;
when the chords and strums came
our
way,

we
f
l
o
a
t
e
d into his world, with him . . .
we didn't know what he'd been through
or where he was
going . . .

all we knew was
his hands had discovered beauty.
he helped fulfill
our
minds . . . he
gave
to our thoughts a new born
remembrance . . .



Still-life

Doss Spotts

The Noble Prize

by

John Wakeen

Perseverance and persistence are noble characteristics of personality, and when displayed with such relentlessness in the face of dilemma as was demonstrated by Emily Grierson in the short story, "A Rose For Emily," one would have to agree that recognition of such noble traits is in order. Yet one would have to agree even more when such traits enable that person to take a situation where his defeat is inevitable, and turn the predicament around so that his position is one of not even being subjected to the situation at all. Such is what Emily did.

The circumstances of Emily's life that led to her battles with such forces as social pressure and time began when she was young, growing up as an only child under the supervision and restrictions of an overshadowing and over-protective father who molded her into a member of the fading Southern milieu of nobility and gentility. Living in the town of Jefferson, the Griersons felt some resentment from the town because of the attitude Mr. Grierson took concerning suitors for Emily. Nobody there had been good enough for his daughter and so he chased them all away. That was the beginning of the problems Emily faced because of her inherited social position. She rose up, though, and instead of denying her background, she used it as a weapon for waging her war on some constricting social mores and also the forward progression of time.

Her background had indeed left her with a problem. When her father died, Emily was past thirty, a virgin, lonely, and worried. Finding a single man in Jefferson of her age and background was impossible so she grabbed the best that she could find; he was a hearty Yankee who happened not to be the marrying type, but he was a man. Realizing that she would never get married to Homer Barron, Emily came full force into the first of her dilemmas. She had the choice of clinging to her background and stature and remaining a virgin, or she could have an affair with him and subject herself to the gossip of a town that already had a fair amount of hostility towards her. The first choice was the defeatist choice, certainly not suitable for someone as proud of herself as Emily, so she chose Homer to be her lover. This may seem like a contradiction — that Emily was, indeed, denying her social station by stooping to consorting with a Yankee — but she, with her strong character and penetrating spirit, had somehow managed to make her affair with Homer transform from something detracting from her aristocratic position to something that strengthened it. The people of Jefferson felt that Emily's reason for having such a relationship was to prove to the town that nothing could drag a person of her background and rank down into the category of loose women.

There were some people who still felt that what she was doing was improper, but Emily handled them with ease. She knew what she wanted and she let neither a Baptist minister nor her two female cousins from Alabama convince her that she should stop letting Homer in the back door at nights. Nobody knew what she did to the poor minister, but she must have really persecuted him, for he refused to talk about it ever again. As for the cousins, Emily used much more subtle tactics. She switched things around so that the very same town, Jefferson, that had summoned the cousins, later aligned itself with Emily and helped scheme to send them back home. Only a person with persistence and determination such

as Emily could have taken such a powerful force as social pressure and twisted it around, so that instead of its being against her — as is the normal situation in small towns down South with women who are single and yet sleep with men — the social forces became an ally. Such changes in taboos usually take well over one-hundred years, for indeed, women still are persecuted in this country for doing what Emily did.

Emily's life was still much like trying to get out of a labyrinth, for as soon as she got around one obstruction she came upon another. Married or unmarried, Homer would eventually have left her, and she knew that she would be alone again. Thus she faced another dilemma, knowing that no matter what she did, as long as Homer was alive, he would leave her. Emily, not about to be crushed, redefined the problem. She made it a matter of simply learning how to enjoy Homer — a dead Homer. First, though, she poisoned him at that moment when a man is most vulnerable, and her reward for coming up with such an ingenious plan was that Homer became her own personal sleeping companion, her guaranteed life-long lover. Certainly that was a tour de force for Emily, demonstrating her flair for persistence, flexibility, adjustment, and ingenuity which was far beyond that of an average woman.

Again, this too may seem somewhat contradictory — it would seem that killing Homer was not a good method of keeping her lover — but the reason that it worked so well for Emily was because she simply looked at it as a problem of having to adjust her surroundings and herself so that she could relate to Homer once more. Most women could not find happiness with a dead lover; Emily was so desperate and she had such determination that she learned how to find happiness and fulfillment with her Homer. She may have compromised a little by killing him, but she certainly had not given in to the situation.

Thus her next problem is obvious. Emily had to learn how to adjust; she somehow had to find a way of remaining a young woman of thirty for the rest of her life, therefore being able to preserve the memories of that special time in her life when she and Homer were lovers who perhaps might go out on Sundays for a carriage ride. She engaged in an all-out war with time, resisting anything that represented change. Her mind, her house, her aristocratic Southern spirit, and her Homer — she kept them all in the past, successful in her goal not to grow old, just like Homer. She remained strong, relying on her nobility and gentility when it came to vanquishing those things that might take her out of her world. Thus when the younger members of the town wanted to confront her about a certain smell coming from her place, her staunch adherence to the past, and her pervading pride and dignity, elicited this response from an old judge, one of her generation, to the younger men, "Dammit, sir, will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?" And so Emily escaped confrontation without saying one single word. She also escaped the burden of paying her taxes by showing the town authorities that she knew when she was right and they were wrong. She knew that the mayor, Colonel Sartoris, had remitted her taxes, and so she instructed the men to see him about it; Colonel Sartoris had long since died, but Emily was unaware of that fact. Then later, by not participating in the mail system, Emily was not only denying the technological changes that come with the passage of time, but she was keeping herself from being subjected to the annual tax notices, a double victory.

The extent to which Emily went to ward off time was limitless. She even surrounded herself with symbols of frozen time. She kept the face of

her pendant watch inside of her belt, and she taught the ancient art of china painting to the little girls of Jefferson to remind herself of an era when it was important that girls be skillful in such things.

Emily's body can be interpreted as symbolizing frozen time; her motionless bloated structure was very close to personifying death in life. She became vampire-like in nature, lifeless and waiting by day, avoiding sunlight and fresh air, and young, vivacious, and fulfilled by night, somehow finding life in the deathly atmosphere of that upstairs room where Homer lay waiting for her each evening.

Thus, Emily succeeded in passing over forty years in her world of stopped time. It may seem as though she did not really succeed because, indeed, her death evidenced the fact that time had been passing, but to her, time truly had not passed. She had remained untouched in mind and spirit by time, accomplishing her goal of remaining a young woman of thirty, anxiously waiting the advent of night to be able, once again, to quench her thirst for love. Emily's aim had not been immortality, but simply companionship while alive, and the only reason that she stopped time was to be able to adjust her world so that she could share in the world that Homer was in.

In conclusion then, the rose that Faulkner dedicated to Emily Grierson in the title of his short story, "A Rose For Emily," has this significance. It is a salute to a magnificent woman, whose character, exhibiting such strengths as persistence, determination, pride, individuality, and ingenuity, enabled her to redefine problems of dilemmatic nature and solutions of contradictory nature so that she could and did emerge undefeated and unvanquished by the forces that opposed her. The reason that Faulkner chose the rose to pay tribute to Emily is because in this way it is a gesture of gentility and refinement, thus making it highly appropriate for a woman such as Emily.

"Shadow of Hel, Passing"

by

Ruth Kodet

In the night of sleeping mankind
there comes a deathly hour
when softly in the darkest part
the dreamer feels the call
that whispers to his body
and breathes into his mind
and petrifies his spirit
then waits for some response.

If no one comes to answer
it quickly passes by
knowing some will join it
before the night is finished
before the dawn dissolves it
and mankind comes to waking
forgetting of the terror
he meets with every night.

Some call it 'Evil Hour'.
Some name it 'Hour of Death' —
When man is at his weakest
and the night is deepest black.

Poem

by

Sarah Jo Houser

To walk out upon the high road
The dangerous road, the long
Abounding in cracks and crevices
Where a right choice may turn wrong

A road alive with life itself -
Where feet dance happy and gay -
Sun shining ahead around a bend
Waiting to light the way

A darksome path, where sight fails
A chilling and frightening way
Lurking evils on every side
Where nerve's last thread may fray

A lonesome pass where dark prevails
That stretches as far as the eye can see
Wandering gullies and climbing hills
Where only more road can be seen

A highway of adventure, a trail of grief
A street of heart's desire
Who would travel such a path?
Only those lit with love's fire.

White Flower

by

Robert J. Herrington

The pretty white flower,
 Away from my grasp,
 Hidden deep in the snow.

I can't see it or feel it
 But I know that it's there
 Calling out to my soul.

I search for its wisdom,
 And all of its truths,
 Its petals bend from my mind.

I'll just have to wait then,
 With a longing heart,
 For the ever passing of time.

One day when I'm older,
 My mind still hunting,
 Knowing it must be there,

I'll always be searching
 For truth, love and wisdom
 And never be filled with despair.



Las Flores

Mark McKnight



